

Information Bulletin

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Title: Increased Controls Needed for Infrequently Performed Activities

Date: December 4, 2006

Identifier: 2006-RL-HNF-0051

Lessons Learned Summary: When an activity is performed infrequently, there is a potential for personnel to unintentionally miss process steps. In this situation, more visual cues, increased planning, clear expectations and proper oversight can help to reduce the potential for human error.

Discussion of Activities: A Tagout Authorization Form (TAF) had been prepared and authorized for work, but the associated work package had been closed without any documentation of TAF completion. The package had been worked during a planned outage in May 2006. Investigation indicates that the work appeared to have been performed using an eight criteria Authorized Worker Lock (AWL) rather than the Controlling Organization (CO) TAF, although no documentation to support installation of an AWL was maintained. Workers recall locks in place and the performance of safe to work checks with no energy found at the work location.

Analysis: Human Performance Improvement investigation determined that:

- This facility does not include a copy of the TAF in the work package.
- While the tag-out number was documented in the work package as required, it was not a sufficient barrier to trigger the appropriate actions.
- When the work was released, the prepared lockout was not provided to authorized workers to install.
- The Person in Charge/ Field Work Supervisor of this activity had a heavy work load, managed multiple simultaneous tasks, and did not ask for assistance or prioritization of the work.
- It was a common practice for Operations to add several minor maintenance tasks to a previously scheduled planned outage. There was a lack of increased planning as the complexity of the outage increased.
- The Maintenance Manager was assigned to two facilities and was unable to assist with the Supervisor's workload/re-prioritization. When these error precursors were reviewed by SWSD management, it was determined that additional personnel were needed to reduce the error-likely situation.

It is critical for personnel to recognize that when work scope increases, planning must also increase. Providing management oversight of workloads creates another check and balance to ensure that personnel are not too busy to give adequate attention to the tasks.

Recommendations:

- Consider using a visual cue (e.g. stamp, TAF) to alert personnel releasing work that a Lock and Tag has been planned.
- Evaluate workloads of personnel who supervise Lockout/tagout activities and take action to reduce distraction and to allow personnel to better focus on the work.
- Retain documentation related to Lockout/tagout activities (e.g., Eight Criteria Checklist). This provides evidence how the work has been performed, and can aid in event reconstruction.

Cost Savings/Avoidance: NA

Work Function: Conduct of Operations - Lockout/tagout

Hazards: Electrical

Keywords: Electrical, Lockout/tagout,

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References: EM-RL--PHMC-SOLIDWASTE-2006-0009

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